

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY, TBIO, CO

SUBJ: PRIMATES FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

REF: BOGOTA 3681

1. AT REQUEST OF REPRESENTATIVE OF MERCK AND CO., MEETING WAS HELD WITH SCI ON SEPTEMBER 28 TO OUTLINE PROBLEMS STILL BEING ENCOUNTERED IN COLOMBIA ON EXPORT OF PRIMATES FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH. IN ADDITION TO MERCK, MEETING INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES OF DHEW/NIH, SMITHSONIAN, TARPON ZOO (FLORIDA), AND MIKE TSALICKIS, TARPON ZOO TRAPPER IN COLOMBIA.

2. TARPON ZOO IS MAJOR U.S. PRIMATE IMPORTER FROM COLOMBIA FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH PURPOSES, AND OPERATION IN COLOMBIA TOTALLY FOR THAT PURPOSE. APPROXIMATELY 90 PERCENT TARPON PRIMATE IMPORTS ARE FOR USG RESEARCH OR USG-SUPPORTED

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RESEARCH. IT FOLLOWING PROCEDURES OUTLINED REFTTEL.

3. TARPON INDICATES INDERENA RESOLUTION OF JULY 5, 1973 PROVIDING QUOTA THROUGH NOVEMBER 30 SHARPLY REDUCED NUMBERS FOR MAJOR SPECIES UNDER WHAT WAS REQUESTED AND REQUIRED WITHOUT EXPLANATION. FURTHERMORE TSALICKIS HAS ENCOUNTERED NUMBER OF DELAYS AND CONFUSION IN INDERENA AS TO WHO HAS AUTHORITY TO SIGN DOCUMENTS.

4. TSALICKIS OVERTURES TO INDERENA THUS FAR APPARENTLY FRUITLESS AND MAY BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE DUE TO HIS COMMERCIAL INTEREST. DEVELOPMENT OF SOURCES IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND/OR SUBSTITUTIONS AMONG SPECIES DO NOT REPRESENT FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVES, ESPECIALLY FOR ONGOING RESEARCH BASED ON SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF COLOMBIAN PRIMATES.

5. TSALICKIS INDICATES HE HAS REVIEWED PROBLEMS IN DETAIL RECENTLY WITH AGATT STARKEY. IN BRIEF WE UNDERSTAND PROBLEMS TO BE:

A. LACK OF CLEAR AUTHORITY IN INDERENA FOR ISSUANCE OF PERMITS.

B. BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS IN INDERENA CREATING UNCERTAIN TIMING AND EXPENSE ON PART OF TARPON OPERATION, INCLUDING CHARTER FLIGHT DELAYS.

C. LACK OF FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE IN INDERENA ON PRIMATE RESOURCES LEADING TO ARBITRARY AND UNEXPLAINABLE CUTS IN NUMBER OF PRIMATES PERMITTED FOR EXPORT FROM NUMBER REQUIRED.

D. EXCESSIVE APPREHENSION ON PART OF INDERENA OVER ENDANGERMENT QUESTION AND/OR FEAR OF BEING CAUGHT UP IN PUBLICITY FLAPS. (ACCORDING TSALICKIS AND OTHERS, NUMBERS FOR MAJOR SPECIES OF PRIMATES REQUIRED FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH ARE FAR BELOW LEVELS WHICH MIGHT THREATEN ENDANGERMENT AND HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WELL BELOW LEVELS WHICH, UNTIL RECENT BAN, WENT TO THE PET TRADE. HE INDICATES HE HAS BEEN TRAPPING SAME AREA FOR 20 YEARS WITH NO DWINDLING OF SUPPLY AND MANY OTHER AREAS HAVE NEVER BEEN TOUCHED.) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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6. WE ARE ADVISED ABOVE PROBLEMS CREATING INADEQUATE NUMBERS AND ERRATIC TIMING OF PRIMATE DELIVERIES FOR PRESENT AND NEAR FUTURE AND WILL HAVE SERIOUS IMPACT ON U.S. RESEARCH PROJECTS AND PLANNING.

7. ABOVE POINTS WERE DISCUSSED AT SUBSEQUENT MERCK LUNCHEON MEETING WITH MINISTER-COUNSELOR LOPEZ-REYES OF

COLOMBIAN EMBASSY. LOPEZ-REYES SEEMED SYMPATHETIC AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS AND OFFERED TO PURSUE MATTER THROUGH HIS GOVERNMENT. HE FELT HOWEVER THAT AN APPROACH ALSO BY THE EMBASSY/BOGOTA MIGHT LIKELY BE MORE EFFECTIVE.

8. IN SUMMARY, IT APPEARS THAT THE FOLLOWING THINGS MAY BE NEEDED IN THE NEAR TERM:

A. TO CLARIFY AND EXPEDITE DOCUMENTATION PROCESSING WITHIN INDERENA, AND

B. TO ISSUE PERMITS FOR EXPORT OF NUMBERS OF PRIMATES FOR RESEARCH CONSONANT WITH NUMBERS REQUESTED AND JUSTIFIED, UNLESS THERE IS A DEMONSTRATED REASON TO DO OTHERWISE.

FOR THE LONGER RANGE THERE APPEARS TO BE A NEED FOR CONSIDERABLY MORE FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE ON PART OF COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES ON ITS PRIMATE RESOURCES SO THAT RATIONAL PLANNING, DECISIONS AND ALLOCATIONS CAN BE MADE.

9. WE WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY VIEWS ON THE ABOVE AND IN PARTICULAR WHAT APPROACHES IT FEELS MIGHT BE MOST EFFECTIVE IN RESOLVING THESE PROBLEMS OF PRESSING CONCERN TO A SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT AT LEAST OF THE U.S. BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH COMMUNITY.

10. FYI. SO FAR AS DEPARTMENT CAN ASCERTAIN NO PRIMATE SPECIES ON TARPON REQUESTS ARE ON THREATENED OR ENDANGERED LISTS OF PENDING CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA TO WHICH COLOMBIA WILL BE SIGNATORY. RUSH

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